



MAPSA

Michigan Association of Public School Academies

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Waiting for 'Superman' A Discussion Guide

A note to read before the movie:

While we at the Michigan Association of Public School Academies (MAPSA) are all about charter public schools, we suggest you watch this movie NOT as a statement about charters vs. traditional public schools, but instead, we urge you to seek the bigger picture, higher messages, and greater opportunities.

At MAPSA, we see *Waiting for 'Superman'* as being about education as a whole. It is about ALL children. In the end, after shaking us to our core, no matter whom we are or where we live, this movie is about solutions. It is about our most outstanding, visionary, and determined educators. *Waiting for 'Superman'* is about what must be and IS POSSIBLE, in all schools, for all children. Every child is as important as the next.

Questions to be asked after the movie:

1. What can we say about each of the children profiled in this movie? What do they share?
2. Without debating school types, what does this movie show about the possibility of increasing achievement for all children? About giving all children greater opportunities to learn?
3. What thoughts and questions do you have about schools in your hometown, as a result of this movie? After exploring the local angle, what thoughts and questions do you have about education statewide?
4. What personal traits are shared by the extraordinary educators portrayed in this movie?
5. How can each of us help move our own schools toward greater solutions? After discussing those thoughts, how can we help advance education statewide?

Something to consider personally & privately:

6. What in this movie was most surprising, disappointing or unsettling to you? What are your personal takeaways from this movie?

This is hard work.

We must accept the challenge of creating quality schools for every child.

We cannot postpone another day, another year, another decade.

We must achieve the goal.

Every child must have the opportunity to learn.

-- Dan Quisenberry, MAPSA President



Parent Empowerment Education Reform Package

PARENTAL CHOICE IS ESSENTIAL. Parents must be free to choose the school that best fits their child's needs without arbitrary limitations or a lottery that decides their child's educational future.

The Parent Empowerment Education Reform Package gives parents more opportunities to choose the best learning environment for their child by expanding choice throughout Michigan. Specifically, the package consists of the following reforms:

1. Pavlov – Charter Schools – (SB 618)
 - a. Removes the arbitrary cap on university-authorized schools.
 - b. Allows good schools to replicate faster and without undue regulatory burdens with the elimination of the single site requirement.
 - c. Allows community colleges to authorize charters state-wide.
 - d. Allows schools to give priority enrollment to the children of their employees.
 - e. Clarifies that public schools are exempt from property tax as long as the building is used exclusively for educational purposes by a public school.
 - f. Allows all public schools to contract for instructional services (section 1231.)
REMOVED IN THE SENATE
2. Colbeck – On-line Learning – (SB 619)
 - a. Expands the options of on-line learning and cyber schools in Michigan.
 - b. Removes the arbitrary cap on the number of cyber schools and the number of students who can enroll in a given school.
3. Robertson – Conversion Schools – (SB 620)
 - a. Allows parents or teachers to convert their school building into a charter school if they are in a failing district.
 - b. Gives the district the first opportunity to charter the school, which will allow the charter to share in tax revenue and bond issues, and to keep their building.
 - c. Make the entity eligible to be chartered by another authorizer if the school district does not agree to charter it within 60 days, but it is not required that the charter get access to the existing building if not authorized by the district.
 - d. Requires that the conversion school meet certain achievement thresholds in order to remain a charter, otherwise it would return to the district.
4. Hansen – Shared time expansion – (SB 621)
 - a. Current law allows non-public schools to enter into agreements with public schools to offer non-public school students certain services or instruction, but the non-public school can only contract with public schools in the district where they are located.

- b. Allows non-public schools to contract with any public school in their intermediate school district or the contiguous intermediate school district.

- 5. Emmons – Dual enrollment expansion – (SB 622, 623, 709, 710)
 - a. Expands the courses and students that are eligible to partake in dual enrollment opportunities.
 - ~~b. Non-public school students will be eligible to utilize dual enrollment.~~

- 6. Pavlov – Schools of choice expansion – (SB 624)
 - a. If a school determines that they have capacity, the school must make the excess capacity available to any student, without regard to where they reside.
 - b. Schools make the capacity determination themselves.



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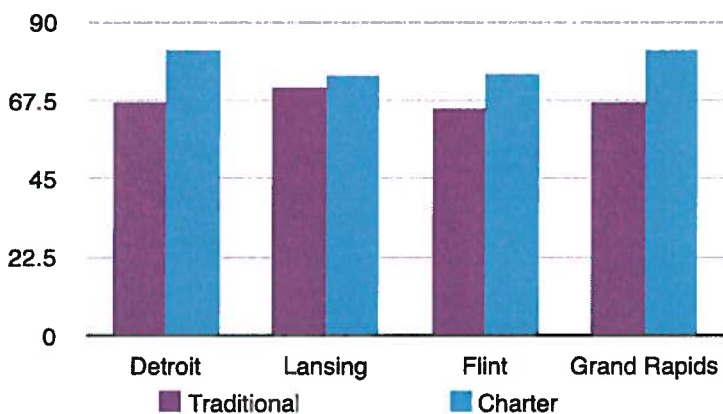
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CHARTER SCHOOLS IN MICHIGAN: POPULAR, SUCCESSFUL, IN DEMAND

They're overwhelmingly popular with parents and the general public. They outperform traditional public schools. The only problem: There aren't enough of them.

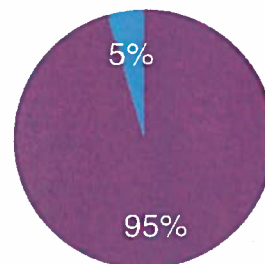
Composite Math and Reading MEAP Scores, 2010



CHARTER SCHOOLS ARE SUCCESSFUL

On the MEAP and AYP, charter schools outperform traditional public schools in similar districts, especially in the state's urban areas.

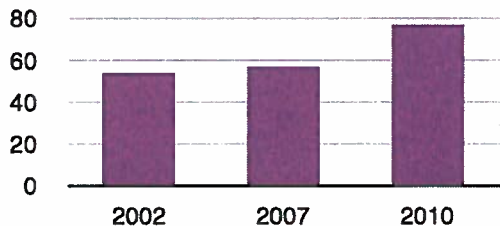
A look at one school's waiting list: At the South Arbor Charter Academy near Ann Arbor last year, less than 5% of the students who applied actually got in. The other 95% are on the waiting list. There were 556 applicants for 26 open spots.



CHARTER SCHOOLS ARE IN DEMAND

More than 70 percent of the state's charter schools have waiting lists.

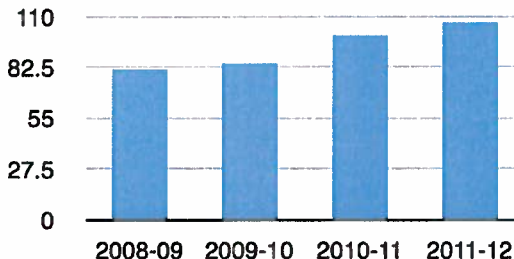
Percentage of Michigan Residents Who Say They Favor Charter Schools



CHARTER SCHOOLS ARE POPULAR

Both nationally and in Michigan, charter schools are overwhelmingly popular – and they're getting more popular every year. The most recent polling shows that 70 percent of Americans and 77 percent of Michigan residents favor charters.

Number of Charter High Schools in Michigan



CHARTER HIGH SCHOOLS ARE ON THE RISE

Out of the 255 charter schools in Michigan at the start of the 2011-2012 school year, 107 of them (42 percent) were high schools.

Parental choice is essential. Parents must be free to choose the school that best fits their child's needs without arbitrary limitations or a lottery that decides their child's educational future.

Michigan's Charter Schools

Achievement • Choice • Accountability



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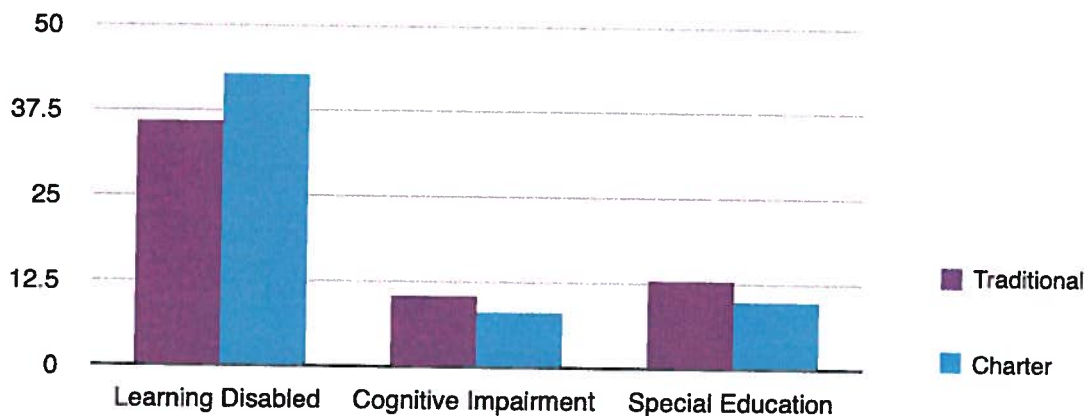
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CHARTER SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Do charter schools provide special education services? Of course. In fact, the percentage of special education students at traditional schools and charter schools is quite similar. And charter schools provide special education services across the spectrum, from mild to moderate to severe.

COMPARING CHARTER SCHOOLS AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS:
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO ARE DISABLED



As the chart shows, **13 percent** of students at traditional public schools are in special education, compared to **10 percent** of students in charter schools – virtually no difference. The difference is even less pronounced when you consider that 5 percent of all special education students aren't even educated in mainstream public school facilities - they're in a dedicated facility that in most cases is utilized by multiple schools in the area.

ALL TYPES OF DISABILITIES: PERCENTAGE OF DISABLED STUDENTS IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

	CHARTER	TRADITIONAL
Learning Disabled	43%	36%
Speech/Language Impairment	30.4%	24.8%
Cognitive Impairment	8.2%	10.5%
Emotional Impairment	5.2%	7.0%
Hearing Impairment	0.7%	1.4%
Visual Impairment	0.3%	0.4%
Physical Impairment	7.5%	8.1%
Early Childhood Delay	0.7%	2.8%
Severe Multiple Impairments	0.8%	1.7%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	2.9%	5.2%
Traumatic Brain Injury	0.3%	0.3%
Deaf/Blind	0.0%	1.7%

“When you look at the proportions of students with different disability types for charter schools, cluster districts and traditional public schools, there are no striking differences between the school populations.”

— Michigan Department of Education, 2008

All data is from the Michigan Department of Education's 2008 report - the most recent in-depth report.









Michigan's Charter Schools

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Empowering Parents

Parental choice is essential. Parents must be free to choose the school that best fits their child's needs without arbitrary limitations or a lottery that decides their child's educational future.

-  **CHARTER SCHOOLS ARE SUCCESSFUL.** On the MEAP and AYP, charter public schools outperform traditional public schools in similar districts, especially in the state's urban areas.
-  **CHARTER SCHOOLS ARE IN DEMAND.** More than 70 percent of charter schools in the state have waiting lists, some of which are double the school's enrollment. Many of these waiting lists are in suburban areas like Washtenaw County and West Michigan, where parents are demanding quality educational options for their children. Last year at the South Arbor Charter Academy outside Ann Arbor, there were 556 applicants for just 26 open spots.
-  **CHARTER SCHOOLS ARE INNOVATIVE.** The traditional educational model is to put all students in a one-size-fits-all box. Charter schools flourish because they're able to target the education to the student, instead of vice versa.
-  **CHARTER SCHOOLS DO MORE WITH LESS.** Charter schools are able to outperform traditional public schools by every measurable standard, despite receiving about \$1,400 less per pupil than those schools.
-  **CHARTER SCHOOLS ARE POPULAR.** Charter schools are popular across the nation, and they're even more popular in Michigan. The most recent polling in Michigan shows that 78 percent of state residents favor charter schools. The most recent national poll shows that 70 percent of Americans favor charter schools. Those numbers are rising each year, which shows the more people learn about charter schools, they more they like them.
-  **THE BEST HIGH SCHOOL IN THE STATE IS A CHARTER SCHOOL.** Some of the highest-performing schools in the state are charter schools, including Black River Public School in Holland, which has been named the state's best high school for the past six years by the Washington Post.
-  **SUCCESS SHOULD BE ABLE TO BREED MORE SUCCESS.** Successful schools, like Black River and many other charter schools in Michigan, should be able to replicate without needless bureaucracy and laws that prohibit good schools from replicating their successful models.
-  **THE MICHIGAN LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS IS ARBITRARY AND OUT OF DATE .** If charter schools are successful, innovative, accountable, in demand and popular, why are we limiting parental choice?



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Facts About Michigan Public Charter Schools

Fact: Charter schools, public schools are held accountable for performance.

Charter schools are in fact public schools, but they are free to be more innovative for improving student achievement. Charter schools are unique public schools that foster a partnership between parents, teachers and students. They create an environment in which parents have the opportunity to be involved, teachers have the freedom to innovate and students have the structure they need to learn. Charter schools are not only accountable to parents, they are held accountable to students as well; those who lack in achievement will be closed.

Fact: Charter schools are succeeding.

Charter school students are more likely to score proficient on a test, more likely to receive a diploma, and more likely to attend college than their peers. In recent MEAP tests, charter schools out performed students in similar districts in 16 out of 18 tests. More over, charter schools beat similar districts MEAP scores in reading and math for all grades in Detroit and Flint by roughly 10% and 15% in Grand Rapids.

Fact: Charter schools educate special education pupils.

Not only do charter schools educate special education students, in many instances they also have more innovative approaches to achieving results and integrating these kids back into the traditional classroom. Based on the 2010 MEAP test, students with disabilities in charter schools out performed similar students in their host districts in both reading and math in all grades.

Fact: Charter schools do not "skim the cream" or "cherry pick" students from other schools.

Charter schools are open to all students. When the number of student applicants exceeds the number of available seats, a random selection lottery is held to determine which students will be enrolled. Charter schools actually enroll a higher proportion of poor, minority students than traditional public schools.

Fact: Charter schools have quality teachers.

Charter school teachers are certified by law and have "highly qualified" designations. They also submit to periodic audits by their authorizers and the state to ensure their compliance. And, of course, are held accountable for student performance.

Fact: Charter schools do not expel students after count day.

Enrollment numbers show that all districts, traditional and charters, experience some movement of students, back and forth, after count days. The movement of students is not one sided, charters receive as many students from traditional districts as traditional districts receive from charters. Second, state law provides for a mechanism for districts to "bill" other districts on a pro-rata basis, for students who enroll after count day.

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